R. Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Manduruca SQ13

Y

CCC

A REPRINT FROM

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST

Organ of

THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
AND AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

VOLUME 59, NO. 6 DECEMBER, 1957

[Title page]

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

Intergroup Hostility and Social Cohesion[1]

ROBERT F. MURPHY
University of California, Berkeley

GEORG SIMMEL (1955:13-4) noted that warfare is frequently the *only* mode of social interaction between primitive societies. He saw the social relations of such groups to be characterized by diametric opposition between the norms of behavior applicable to members of the ingroup, on one hand, and toward members of outgroups, on the other. This dichotomy was internally self-consistent to Simmel, and he wrote (*ibid*: 14):

> For this reason, the same drive to expand and to act, which within the group requires unconditional peace for the integration of interests and for undisturbed interaction, may appear to the outside world as a tendency toward war.

Intergroup conflict was viewed by Simmel has having positive functions; it provides the basis for group formation and cohesion, and it accentuates and maintains group boundaries. Conflict, then, is not aberrant or dysfunctional. Rather, it structures social relations both within and between societies.

Lewis Coser (1956:38), writing to Simmel's general thesis, points out that social cohesion does not automatically follow from conflict, for "social systems lacking social solidarity are likely to disintegrate in the face of conflict, although some unity may be despotically enforced." The corollary proposition is offered that:

> . . . if the basic social structure is stable, if basic values are not questioned, cohesion is usually strengthened by war through challenge to, and revitalization of, values and goals which have been taken for granted (*ibid*:38).

Coser's view by no means contradicts that of Simmel but is an elaboration of the latter's thesis, as cited above, that intergroup hostility and social cohesion are only analytically *different* aspects of the same social process. Conflict and social solidarity are mutually re-enforcing; conflict promotes social integration, and solidarity is necessary if the group is to take effective common action against the outer world.

The present paper will analyze the warfare pattern of a Brazilian Indian group, the Mundurucú, in the light of the propositions given by Simmel and elaborated by Coser. We will go beyond the thesis that warfare contributes to the maintenance of the social structure to consider also how this social structure organized the membership for military activity. Further, the thesis will be advanced that this type of social structure actually generated the bellicose activities and attitudes that functioned to preserve it, and that this circular relationship allowed Mundurucú society to continue through a period during which it was subjected to severe internal and external threats. Finally, we will conclude with a general hypothesis upon the relation between social structure, social cohesion, and conflict.

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

THE MUNDURUCÚ

The Mundurucú, a Tupian speaking people, are presently located in a region of mixed forest and savannah east of the Tapajós River in the state of Pará, Brazil, between the sixth and eighth degrees of south latitude. Highly acculturated and almost assimilated remnants of the tribe are also found on the Secundurí, Abacaxí and Maués Rivers in the adjoining state of Amazonas. The Mundurucú were first reported upon in the latter region in 1768 (Monteiro Noronha, 1862). Their military strength was rapidly impressed upon the colonists of the Amazon Valley, for they commenced a series of strong attacks upon forts along the Amazon River that continued until the colonial government retaliated and in 1795 struck at the Mundurucú homeland on the upper Tapajós River. There is no information on the impact of this attack on the Mundurucú, but they ceased raiding white settlements immediately thereafter and in time became active allies of the colonists and the Portuguese colonial government. So rapidly did the Mundurucú adapt to the whites that by 1817 Ayres de Casal (1817:237) wrote, "Nearly all of the Mundurucú hordes are today our allies, and some already are Christians." But the Mundurucú had by no means become pacific, and raids, often instigated by the whites, were pushed with unabated fury against other Indian tribes.

Shortly after their contact with the white colonists, segments of the Mundurucú were evidently in the process of migrating northward along the Tapajós River and into the country between the Tapajós and Madeira Rivers. The Mundurucú who settled in these more northerly regions soon became assimilated into the neo-Brazilian population. Missions and mission-sponsored reductions were established in their midst at several locales, and their inhabitants intermarried with the Portuguese and mestiso colonists. The population of these Indian reductions declined throughout the century; Coudreau (1897:8) states that the old Mundurucú reduction of Uxituba had 485 Indians in 1833, 343 in 1848, 100 in 1869 and only 50 in 1895. Others, such as Boim and Itaituba, lost their Indian character and became Brazilian towns. By 1885 the process had advanced so far that Charles F. Hartt (1885:117) noted: "The Mundurucú of the Tapajós, below the rapids, are now all civilized and so mixed with the general population that their nationality has in large part been lost."

The balance of the tribe, which remained south, or upstream, of the head of navigation of the Tapajós River, maintained relative autonomy. They conducted trade, at first in manioc flour and later in raw latex, with Brazilian traders who seasonally ascended the river, but no permanent Brazilian settlements were located above the Cachoeira de Maranhão, a series of impassable rapids. At the end of the century, however, the boom in rubber extraction attracted permanent trading posts to the upper Tapajós River, and a Catholic mission was established on the banks of the river.

The rubber boom terminated the isolation of the Mundurucú of the upper Tapajós. The population became involved in rubber production for barter, and, although the new economic pursuit did not seriously hamper their tradi-

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

tional subsistence activities, it placed severe inhibitions upon the extensive sorties formerly customary.

Warfare did not end until about 1912, over a century after the Mundurucú had made peace with the whites. During this time certain internal modifications had occurred in the social structure, but social cohesion had remained intact and the boundaries of the society were still sharply defined and vigorously maintained. Although members were lost to Brazilian society, a hard core of population living near the upper Tapajós River made war upon other Indian groups with energy and success. This was not "aboriginal" warfare; it was frequently waged on behalf of the whites and with firearms supplied by them. But the only information on Mundurucú warfare of any value pertains to the 19th century and was derived from older informants and published sources. This, then, is the proper time dimension of our study, and we turn now to a consideration of the relevant aspects of Mundurucú culture during this period.

The Mundurucú villages were located in the midst of grass-covered savannahs surrounded by dense forest, but their subsistence economy was essentially the same as other groups of the Amazon rain forest. Hunting was important throughout the year, and fishing was primarily a dry season activity. Garden crops included the usual range of Tropical Forest vegetables and fruits, and bitter manioc was the staple product. Manioc flour, known as *farinha* in Brazil, was also traded to the whites by the Mundurucú and constituted their most important commercial commodity in the period prior to the rubber boom.

The division of labor and the organization of work reflected certain basic aspects of Mundurucú social structure. The men hunted and fished and carried out the strenuous task of garden clearing, while the women did the rest of the horticultural work and tended the households. Residence was matrilocal, and the females of each house formed a nucleus of matrilineally related kinswomen; each such household was also a communal work and consumption unit. Each Mundurucú village had about three to five such houses and a men's house; the latter was the locus of male activity, for all the village men slept, ate, worked, and relaxed within its confines.

The membership of the men's house was eclectic in relation to descent. The Mundurucú were divided into more than forty patrilineal clans, linked by loose and unnamed phratric affiliations, and parcelled almost equally between patrilineal, exogamous moieties. But the matrilocal residence rule and the resultant shift of men from their natal households and, commonly, villages continually blocked the formation of co-resident descent groups.

Despite the diversity of their local and lineal origins, the men of a village, and ultimately of the whole tribe, were expected to maintain harmonious and cooperative relations. Cooperation in economic activities transcended the minimal necessities of their ecological adaptation, and any open show of aggression between men was strictly prohibited. The men's house provided the organizational framework within which this unity was expressed, while male

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

values were supernaturally reinforced by their possession of the sacred trumpets, or *karoko*. Each village maintained a set of three of these instruments, and they were absolutely taboo to the eyes of the women, who were thought to have once owned them.

Political controls were not elaborate. Each village had a chief, whose position was bolstered by the fact that his sons were generally exempt from the matrilocal residence rule. Although there were no patterns of continuous supravillage leadership, relations between communities were very close and involved intermarriage and joint participation in ceremonies and warfare. Tribal feeling was highly developed and conflict between villages was totally absent.

THE CONDUCT OF WARFARE

Mundurucú warfare was distinguished by a complete lack of any defensive psychology, and the Mundurucú looked upon themselves as aggressors and victors. They have been described as " . . . one of the most valorous and feared [tribes] of all the hinterland of Amazonia" (Almeida Serra 1869:4), while, on the other hand, the French explorer Henri Coudreau (1897:142) wrote in righteous indignation that, "The Mundurucú practice neither justice, nor duel, nor warfare, but only assassination." This harsh judgment seems not to fit the people who extended my wife and me kindness and hospitality, and who were invariably soft-spoken, humorous, and gentle. But these same gentle people spoke at length and with great animation of their former prowess as warriors and of expeditions against other tribes in which the enemy men and women were killed and decapitated and their children stolen. Nothing about their own culture interested the Mundurucú as much as the extinct but still remembered patterns of warfare, and the older men were zealous informants on that subject.

The human world was seen by the Mundurucú to consist of two distinct spheres; there were "people" or Mundurucú, and *pariwat*, a term referring to any non-Mundurucú human. With the exception of the neighboring Apiacá Indians and the white men, all pariwat were enemies. An enemy was not merely a person to be guarded against but was a proper object of attack, and the Mundurucú pursued this end with extraordinary vigor and stamina. Before 1795 they attacked Santarém and ranged near the mouth of the Amazon to strike the fort of Gurupá. Hartt (1885:116) stated that Mundurucú war parties had penetrated into the eastern part of the province of Maranhão, where they were beaten back by "Apinagés."[9] Tocantins (1877:98) claimed that the Mundurucú knew the city of Cuyabá in Mato Grosso, and informants told of raids as far as the upper waters of the Juruena, São Manoel, and Madeira Rivers. These expeditions apparently carried the warriors over 500 miles from home and must have involved trips of well over 1,000 miles. And the Mundurucú traveled solely by foot; bark canoes were made and used only for the purpose of crossing large streams. These were exceptional journeys, but

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

even short expeditions could well take a party over 200 miles from home; and 200 miles through dense, trackless forest and across major streams is no mean trip.

It is obvious that Munduruci warfare consisted of much more than sporadic and short forays. The average party campaigned only during the dry season, setting out when the rivers fell in May and returning before they again rose in November. Longer expeditions set out at the end of the rains and remained in the field throughout the rainy season and the following dry period, returning before the next rains.

As among the Indians of the North American Plains, youths sought openly for the excitement of war and looked upon it as a means of self-validation and aggrandizement of prestige. But unlike the Plains Indians, the Munduruci did not openly assert this prestige once it was won; if anything, the person who achieved status became even more self-effacing and less prone to open competitiveness. The young men, however, did not embark upon raids by themselves. They expressed their desire to the chief of the village in words indicative of the martial disposition of the society: "My grandfather, take us to hunt the parivat. We wish to die in the forest, not in the village." The chief consulted with the older men in order to decide whether the occasion was auspicious. If there was general approval, he proceeded to organize a war party that would include the eager young but would be under the competent direction of experienced elders, for age in Munduruci society was an important criterion of status.

Although the initiative for a war originated in one village, men from several villages participated. The determination of a village to form a war party was quickly communicated to other communities, but a formal invitation had to be extended. This was carried by a man of the *Muchacha* society, a group of older warriors who were especially well versed in Munduruci lore and songs and who had taken enemy heads. As the messenger neared each village he sounded three short blasts on a horn used only by members of the society, and was answered by a like signal from a Muchacha of the village being invited. After entering the village, he delivered the invitation and proceeded on his itinerary, collecting volunteers from a number of communities.

Intervillage cooperation enabled the Munduruci to place large war parties in the field without stripping any one village of all its manpower. Those who took part generally desired to clear land for gardens first, but even when this was not possible or when the expedition lasted more than a year, the horticultural cycle could be maintained by those remaining behind. The problem of leadership of a group drawn from several communities was resolved by delegating authority to two village chiefs who were also members of the Muchacha society. Actually, the two formal leaders did not have absolute control, and all important decisions were made by the older men of the expedition acting as a body.

The war party was accompanied by the wives of the warriors and a number of unmarried girls. Their tasks were to carry cooking utensils and all of

7: 30 Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Munduruca SQ13

the equipment of the men, except for their arms, thus leaving the males unencumbered for hunting and fighting. They also cooked, fetched water and firewood and performed other female services. Contrary to Spix and von Martius' (1823–1831) assertion that the women helped on the battlefield, informants said that the women were always left at a safe distance from the scene of combat. The men then proceeded to encircle the enemy village under cover of darkness.

No various rituals were held prior to the departure of the expedition, but the most powerful shaman available always accompanied the war party and throughout the course of march was able to ascertain events in the enemy village by sending one of his instruments ahead to spy upon the foe. Once the village had been encircled, the shaman blew an eagle bone or macaw feathers in the direction of the houses in order to put the enemy into a deep sleep. Eagle feathers were similarly directed at the village in the belief that this would cause the defenders to become confused and impotent in the face of attack.

When the occupants of the village were benumbed, the warriors waited for the cry of a species of bird that breaks into song at dawn. When this signal was heard, the chiefs sounded blasts on their horns and cried the order to attack. Incendiary arrows, made by affixing dried cum-cubs to the end of the arrow shaft, were ignited and loosed at the thatch roofs of the houses. The Munduruci then broke from cover and dashed into the clearing of the enemy village, emitting wild shouts calculated to terrify the people. Adult males and females were killed and decapitated, and prepubescent children of both sexes were captured by the attackers. The Munduruci then beat a hasty retreat before the enemy could reorganize his forces and summon additional support.

The retiring Munduruci force drove its captive children ahead hurriedly and stopped at the temporary shelter only long enough to pick up the women and supplies. They then made a day and night forced march until they had reached a safe distance from the enemy. At this point, the expedition turned toward home or, frequently, to new fields of conquest.

A central object of the raid was the taking of enemy heads, and a strict protocol was observed in the preparation of the trophies. After killing an enemy man or woman, the warrior quickly decapitated the corpse. The spine was severed at the foramen magnum, but the skin was cut around the chest, shoulders, and back to leave a substantial flap below the point of severance. The excess skin compensated for the inevitable shrinkage that accompanied desiccation. A piece of wood was then thrust into the mouth of the trophy to prevent its locking closed in *rigor mortis*. During the return march the head was preserved by removing the brains, boiling it, and then drying it near a bonfire.

The war party broke up after reaching Munduruci country, and the participants proceeded to their respective villages. Signals were sounded on horns a short distance outside the villages, and two messengers were sent to inform the people of the results of the raid. The boys of the community went to meet the wailing warriors and received the trophy heads from them. They ran

showed to the men's house and displayed the prizes to the other men and told them who had taken each. The warriors and their accompanying women then entered the village, and each delivered his captive children to the care of his wife and went to the men's house, where the trophy heads were returned to their owners.

Although the waiting members of the community showed joy at the return of the war party, especially if it had been successful, mourning was in order for those who had fallen in the fray. Among the Munduruci, each clan recognizes certain other clans of the opposite moiety as their *ibeiwaitit*, or people who have the responsibility of burying the dead of the clan. This function is looked upon as more than a duty; moieties are conceived as ritually hostile bodies, and the *ibeiwaitit* consider it a pleasure to bury the dead of the complementary clan. When the whole body is not available, it is considered necessary to the maintenance of proper relations between moieties that some part of the dead be buried. Since it was not expedient to bring the dead back to Munduruci territory for interment, it was customary for a member of a slain warrior's *ibeiwaitit* to sever his humerus and return it for the mortuary rites. This practice was said to have been followed also in the cases of men who were too severely wounded to continue the homeward journey; needless to say, they died shortly thereafter. When it was impossible to retrieve the humerus of the dead, a piece of arrow cane was cut to simulate the bone.

The *ibeiwaitit* member who had brought the arm bone of the dead back to the village would place it in a basket in his wife's dwelling and keep it there for about a month. People from other villages were invited to attend the burial, and on this occasion other members of the deceased's *ibeiwaitit* engaged in ritual dispute for the honor of burying the bone. The humerus was always retained by the man who had secured it, and it was buried in the floor of his house.

Thus far we have discussed the roles of war leaders, the Machacha society, the shaman, and the *ibeiwaitit* of the fallen warrior, but other social statuses connected with warfare became activated after the return of the expedition. A wounded warrior was treated as if dead for one year after the hostilities; he had no sexual relations, his hair was allowed to grow long, and the use of his name was tabooed during that period.

The most important status was that of a taker of a trophy head, who was referred to as *Dajeboili*. Literally, the title means "mother of the peccary," an allusion to the Munduruci view of other tribes as being equivalent to game animals. The "mother" part of the term is derived from the trophy head's power to attract game and to cause their numerical increase, and the head-hunter was so titled because of his obvious fertility promoting function; paradoxically for such a seemingly masculine status, he symbolically filled a female role.

The trophy head was believed to exert a powerful charm over the spirit protectors of the animal world and thus improved the supply and availability of game. Each time that the men of the village went hunting, the Dajeboili

7: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Munduruca SQ13

took his trophy a short distance into the forest, where its magical effect was exercised. But the supernatural power of the head could only be maintained when certain precautions were observed. Both the taker of the head and his wife were prohibited from sexual intercourse and were supposed to avoid looking upon any person who had recently indulged in the act. Accordingly, they lived very restrained and unpleasant lives; the Dajebuiki spent most of his time lying in his hammock, and his wife was assigned special assistants to perform her household and garden chores.

The Dajebuiki was also responsible for sponsoring a series of ceremonies that took place during three successive rainy seasons following the return of the expedition. During the first, which took place shortly after the return of the war party, feather pendants were attached to the ears of the trophy head; certain clans had the prerogative of affixing the feathers of particular species of birds. Also, the eye sockets were sealed with beeswax and two pieces resin were placed across each eye. During the second phase of the ceremony, the ornaments and skin were stripped from the skull and it was retired to a corner of the men's house. The third part of the ceremony was devoted to stringing the enemy's teeth on a woven cotton belt. This ornament served as a permanent trophy of the slain enemy, and the skull was left to deteriorate in the men's house.

The final phase of the ceremony involved the greatest degree of intervillage participation, for it served as a communal reunion of the *Daxdéki* or "mothers of the arrow." The Daxdéki was a society devoted to the celebration of Munduruci arms, and included all adult males. At this time, a great feast was held, martial songs were sung, and the young boys were given instruction in the songs of the Daxdéki. At the conclusion of the celebration, the ceremonial cycle terminated and the Dajebuiki and his wife resumed their normal life.[9]

No special honor was accorded the warrior who captured children. They were turned over to his wife to rear as her own. Having been incorporated into the kinship system through adoption, the children were accorded the treatment appropriate to their relationship status. In time, they married members of the opposite moiety and lived through a normal Munduruci life cycle. Contemporary informants affirm that captives were in no way treated as inferiors, although their origins were certainly remembered. Young men were said to have taken part in Munduruci war parties, even in attacks against their native group. No cases of defection were reported.

GOALS OF WARFARE

George Fathauer (1954: 110) maintains in a recent article that the Mohave "conception of war was largely non-instrumental: it was an end in itself." The Munduruci looked upon warfare in much the same way; war was considered an essential and unquestioned part of their way of life, and foreign tribes were attacked because they were enemies by definition. This basic orientation emerged clearly from interviews with informants. Unless direct, specific questions were asked, the Munduruci never assigned specific causes to particular

wars. The necessity of every having to defend their home territory was denied, and provocation by other groups was not remembered as a cause of war in Munduruku tradition. It might be said that enemy tribes caused the Munduruku to go to war simply by existing, and the word for enemy meant merely any group that was not Munduruku.

Despite this seemingly undirected aggressiveness, it was possible to establish through direct questioning and by analysis of field data that certain individual and social goals were realized through warfare. The more important of these goals will be analyzed and their significance as causes of the institution of warfare will be evaluated in the following section.

The Munduruku were partially motivated to war by the quest for manufactured goods, which, as noted earlier, were obtained from the Brazilians in return for service as mercenary warriors against unpacified tribes. The symbiotic relationship that became established was noted by Chandless (1862:276) who wrote that the Munduruku were "honest and faithful," and "very friendly toward white people, warring only against unpacified Indians while preserving those friendly with the whites."

The scope and importance of Munduruku mercenary activities is impressive. In the early 19th century, the whites urged them to attack the troublesome Mura Indians of the lower Madeira River, and so great was their success that the Mura were scattered as far as the vicinity of Ega, hundreds of miles up the Amazon River (Bates 1863:106-9). Keller de Canal (1867:237-8) reported that many of the victims of the Munduruku, among them the Mura, were forced to seek the protection of the white settlements. The traders who employed the Munduruku thus obtained a dual advantage; the hostiles were not only quelled but were driven into the arms of the labor-hungry whites.

Later missionaries also attest to the alliance with the Brazilians. The Munduruku were enlisted by colonial officials during the Revolution of the Cabanos in 1835-68, and one of their leaders in the war was given an honorary commission in the army in recognition of his services (Harris 1869:132)—Barata (1864:162) reports that in about 1853 the Munduruku were instrumental in helping the Brazilians of the Madeira River to suppress the Amara Indians, and Tocantins (1877:146) states that shortly before his journey to the Munduruku, the latter struck at a marauding group of Parintintin Indians at the behest of the Brazilians. Coudreau (1897:39-40) relates another case of mercenary service by the Munduruku, whom he characterizes as a people "known for selling their military value to whatever wants to pay for it." On this occasion, three traders of the Madeira River had been killed by hostile Indians, and their colleagues went to the Munduruku of the upper Tapajós River and offered merchandise in return for a retaliatory expedition. The offer was accepted but the sortie was a failure, for most of the 60 men and 40 women who took part in the raid died of illness before contacting the enemy.

Although mercenary service is one of the more interesting aspects of Munduruku warfare during the 19th century, contemporary informants hardly thought it worthy of mention. They acknowledged their alliance with

7: Murphy E.-S (1952-1953):937 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

the whites with some pride, but viewed their efforts as civilizing missions against the "savage Indians," or "Indians of the forest." Their attitude was clearly that they did what had to be done and had always been done; the enumeration was secondary.

It is impossible to determine what proportion of Munduruci warfare in the last century was instigated by the whites, but it is clear that many, and probably most, raids were conducted against groups having no enmity or even contact with Brazilian society. It is evident that the Munduruci did not remain warlike solely for reasons of material gain, but necessary service did serve to encourage the perpetuation of a deeply rooted pattern. Whether or not economic and ecological conditions stimulated warfare in the preceding century is difficult to ascertain. It is known that the area of Munduruci occupation expanded northward in the late 18th and early 19th centuries into regions formerly inhabited by other groups. While the Munduruci moved into a vacuum that they had helped to create, it is almost certain that assimilation and depopulation due to disease had decimated the ranks of the previous occupants far more than had Munduruci arms, and the population of the latter was already on the wane. Additional territory was hardly the goal of the migrant Munduruci; the lure of manufactured articles available through trade with the white settlements offers a more adequate explanation of their northward drift to the lower Madeira and Tapajós Rivers.

The secondary nature of economic goals in Munduruci warfare is even more manifest when looting is considered. No objects of significant economic value were taken, and the raiders maintained their mobility by traveling light. Captive children were a far more important class of booty than were material items. Captive-taking was a means of strengthening the group through the addition of new members, but it is not certain whether the movement compensated for the loss of mature warriors and their female followers. If, however, one accepts intense warfare as a given factor, the capture of children was important to its successful continuance. Moreover, the Munduruci valued and desired children, and the captives were treated as the captor's own.

The Munduruci warrior was strongly motivated by the desire to achieve prestige through the demonstration of valor, especially as signified by the taking of a trophy head. The Dajebaiik was subjected to very onerous restrictions, but he was rewarded by the lifetime respect of his fellowmen. However, if he was to maintain his position and advance to the high status of a Madachu, it was expected that he would also become a font of traditional lore and songs. Prestige was not openly asserted among the Munduruci, and the tone of the society was strongly egalitarian. Decision-making was decentralized and informal and joint activity depended upon the consensus of the participants, but the successful headhunter exerted considerable influence in the attainment of such consensus—albeit through subdued means.

Despite the fact that individual wars were undertaken because of the desire of the participants to gain prestige, it would be most dubious to admit this as a fundamental cause of warfare. It seems almost a truism to say that

the individual who demonstrates proficiency in the attainment of a socially desirable goal will himself be valued and that this will motivate him to appropriate action, but this still does not answer the question of why the goal and the accompanying activity is valued. Newcomb (1950:329) has stated the same case with cogency in regard to Plains warfare.

The trophy head was prized as a symbol of Mundurucú prowess and of its owner's status, but it was also sought because it was the center of a number of magico-religious observances. The trophy was thought to be pleasing to the spirit protectors of the game animals because it had inherent power, contingent upon the proper observance of connected ritual acts. The possession of a trophy head thus resulted in greater economic abundance, and in this sense it served the same general purpose as does the *Jívaro tsentsa*. However, this aspect of the trophy quest does not cast much light upon Mundurucú headhunting, for alternate ways of pleasing the spirits were known and practiced. The ceremonial and shamanistic techniques of propitiating the spirit protectors of game animals were complex both in practice and in doctrinal content. In contrast, the linkage of the trophy head and the spirits was vague and ephemeral, it is probable that headhunting developed subsequent to the rites connected with the animal spirits and had become only loosely integrated with them. It is to be expected that any important social activity will become value and belief collected in this manner, but it would be erroneous to proceed to explain the activity by its supporting ideology.

Finally, it should be considered that the Mundurucú looked upon fighting as a source of sport and excitement. The enemy was looked upon as game to be hunted, and the Mundurucú still speak of the pursuit in the same terms that they reserve for peccary and tapir. War was a relief from boredom, but it is not surprising that peace would be boring to people who consider themselves warriors. One might ask why they did not relieve boredom in log racing as do some groups, or in drinking bouts as did many of their neighbors. In short, can we not look upon activity and play drives as being inherent within the species and proceed from that vantage to explain the particular way they are manifested in particular cultures?

FUNCTIONS OF MUNDURUCÚ WARFARE

The manifest goals of warfare provide us with an understanding of the motives that motivated the Mundurucú warrior. The religious and sportive aspects of warfare were found to be considerably more ephemeral than were the economic and prestige goals involved, but even the latter two depended upon the existence of a social organization that allowed and encouraged intensive military activity by its very nature. Moreover, the most important single motivation to hostility was a generalized aggressiveness that recognized no specific aims, and this factor yields the most important single clue to an understanding of Mundurucú warfare. If specific goals do not fully explain the extent and intensity of the pattern, and if the pressure of external circumstances did not force battle, then the main dynamics of warfare must be sought

P: Murphy E-9 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

within the structure of the society. We must explain the function of warfare, as the social conditions that caused the Mundurucú to direct enormous hostility against an amorphously inimical outside world.

As a first step toward answering this question, we turn briefly to a re-examination of Mundurucú military organization. Leaving out of consideration for the moment the bellicosity of the Mundurucú, the single factor that contributed most to the success of their arms was the tribal organization of war parties. The recruitment of men from a number of communities aggrandized their expeditions while leaving unimpaired the economic and defensive functions of the villages. Tribalism was also central to the ceremonies that were held at the conclusion of a war. On these occasions the tribal warrior society, or Dami, gathered to celebrate the prowess of Mundurucú arms, and the widely scattered members of certain clans assembled to exercise their prerogative of attaching particular decorations to the trophy heads.

Intercommunity cooperation in warfare was facilitated by the peculiar juxtaposition of matrilocal residence and patrilineal descent. The male Mundurucú population was thereby linked by cross-cutting ties of residential affinity and affiliation by descent. For example, any Mundurucú man was a member of his own village, in most cases a native of another village, and in several instances a former resident of the village of a divorced wife; he was also linked by ties of patrilineal descent to all the villages in which members of his clan resided. On the other hand, he was not involved in any cohesive and localized lineage unit. The kinship structure imposed no boundaries upon the local group; the main social world was the tribe.

The manner in which bonds were extended throughout the tribe necessitated certain social adjustments. The residence rule destroyed the residential basis of patrilineality and thereby weakened clanship. Correspondingly, the only enduring group of coresidents, consanguineal kinsmen was the extended family of women related in the female line. Such aggregates of females posed a threat to the superordinate position of the men which was resolved through several means, one of the most important of which was residence in the men's house. This unit freed the male from the necessity of becoming integrated into the economy and authority structure of his wife's household in villages in which he had no supporting group of kinsmen. Although he owed respect and some service to his father-in-law, the locus of his social and economic life was the men's house; this provided the framework within which a group of men from diverse villages was welded into a highly unitary working and fighting unit. Their position as a militant and self-conscious social entity, demarcated from and superior to the women, was reinforced by the cult of the sacred musical instruments. Thus male solidarity was promoted on a tribal level through the dispersal of patrilineal kinsmen, and on the village level through the men's house.

The organization of 19th-century Mundurucú society made male solidarity on the village and tribal level not only possible but a functional necessity. Conflict had to be rigorously suppressed, for if men became arrayed in overt

T. Murphy E-9 (1952-1955)1957 SQ13 Munduruca SQ13

violence along lines of residential affinity, it would pit patrilineal kin against each other and destroy the very fabric of the kinship structure. And if the combatants aligned themselves according to kinship affiliations, strife could break out within villages and even within households. The Mundurucú situation is opposite that found in some segmentary societies, in which, following Fortes' (1945: 240-4) analysis, strife between kinship-territorial units of similar scope is actually productive of social equilibrium.

The necessity for suppressing overt conflict as the only alternative to serious disruptions of social relations was complemented by the necessity for male cohesion and unity in villages whose hereditary inhabitants were the women. As a result, Mundurucú ethical values enjoined absolute harmony and cooperation upon all the males of the tribe. No such feeling was expected in intermale relations. The female ingroup was limited to the membership of one or two extended families; beyond these limits, open jealousy and fighting could and did occur. This dichotomy in ethical values is understandable when one considers how different were the male and female social contexts.

Interpersonal and intergroup grievances will arise in all human societies as a necessary concomitant of social life, and the Mundurucú are no exception to this rule. Despite the surface tranquility of interpersonal relations among the males, numerous causes of latent antagonism existed. One potentially disruptive factor of especial significance to the problem at hand was that patrilineal succession to the chieftaincy was assured by exempting the chief's sons from the matrilocal rule. The extended family of the chief thus became the largest and most cohesive such unit in the village, for it retained sons while gathering sons-in-law. The presence of his own patrilineal kinsmen reinforced the chief's position, but it also resulted in antagonism and resentment on the part of the other men of the village, over whom he exerted no lineage-based authority. Evidence to support this statement can be found in contemporary Mundurucú society in a number of cases of sorcery accusation and punishment. In one village the chief and his son were both slain as suspected witches. In another, the family of the chief wished to execute an accused sorcerer against the will of the other residents, and in a third village the family of the chief protected one of their number against the intention of the other villagers to execute him. No evidence of such tensions would have been manifest to the casual observer in any of the three villages; the disaffected parties usually maintain cordial and cooperative relations with their antagonists both before and after the climax of the train of events, but they generally move from the village as soon as convenient. These conflicts, then, are instrumental in furthering the fragmentation of villages under the current condition of pacification.

Given the potentially centrifugal nature of leadership, descent, and residence, warfare functioned to preserve, or at least prolong, the cohesiveness of Mundurucú society. The chief was able to maintain his leadership over his lineally eclectic group of followers through his position as war leader and his complementary role as mediator between them and Brazilian society. To the

9. Murphy R-S [1952-1953]1957 SQ13 Munduruc SQ13

Munduruú these are the essential functions of chieftainship, and contemporary informants commonly ascribe the decline of nucleated village life to the disappearance of such attributes of leadership.

Of even greater importance to the integration of Munduruú society, warfare activated and intensified male unity and values, both of which functioned to make matrilocality viable. Finally, the only permissible intrasocietal mechanism for the release of aggression was sorcery and the killing of sorcerers, and the previously cited cases indicate that they created as many tensions as they resolved. Actually, the only way in which hostility could be unleashed without damage to the society was against the outside world. Paradoxically for a people who considered all the world an ally enemy, the true cause of enmity came from within their own society.

Much of the preceding argument has hinged upon the matrilocal and patrilineal character of Munduruú society. In a recent article I showed that Munduruú social structure in the 19th century could only be understood as a result of post-contact change and that the aboriginal society was organized on patrilocal and patrilineal lines (Murphy 1956). The fact that the Munduruú were vigorous warriors before their shift to matrilocality suggests that warfare acquired new functions subsequent to that change and consequently upon it. These new functions, as they have been outlined in this paper, provide us with an understanding of how Munduruú society remained cohesive and maintained its boundaries through more than a century of contact with the whites.

We will now broaden our analysis of the function of warfare within Munduruú society to the closely related problem of its function within the structure of Munduruú-Brazilian relationships. The two bases of this symbiosis were trade and war. Matrilocality evolved as a result of trade relations with the whites, but it was workable in a patrilineal society only when intrasocietal hostilities were repressed and latent antagonisms channeled into intense warfare. Warfare and the connected ceremonies also helped to perpetuate the system of clanship in this newly-evolved type of society, for they constituted almost the only occasions upon which corporate functions of the fragmented descent groups were exercised. Conversely, matrilocality and patrilineality provided the structure for warfare on a tribal scale and thus enabled the Munduruú successfully to pursue hostilities against comparatively undisrupted tribes during a period when their own numbers were being reduced through disease and emigration to Brazilian settlements. And by frequently undertaking raids in the service of the whites, the Munduruú had solidified their peaceful relationship with the technologically and numerically superior society. The Brazilians were willing to respect the autonomy of the Munduruú so long as it was useful to them. We may conclude that the system of of matrilocality and patrilineality and the institution of warfare were mutually reinforcing and served to maintain Munduruú society during a period that witnessed the disappearance or dissolution of many of their neighbors.

?: Murphy E-2 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the functions of Mundurucú warfare has concluded that the institution operated to preserve the integration and solidarity of Mundurucú society. These findings accord closely with Simmel's theory of conflict and are also substantiated by Fernandes' (1952:304) conclusion on the functions of Tupinambá warfare. The means by which this social end was accomplished can be viewed as a variable of the Mundurucú type of society. The latter was of a unique order; it was structured so as to ramify kinship bonds throughout the tribe, but it was extremely vulnerable to any open display of aggression within the group. This, and the ambivalent position of the men, resulted in the suppression of hostility and the emphasis upon solidarity that characterized male social relations. Such solidarity could be maintained only through the release of latent aggression in a socially valued manner upon surrogate objects. Mundurucú warfare thus corresponds to Coser's (1956:40) formulation of the "safety valve" mechanism in society:

Social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects. They provide substitute objects upon which to displace hostile sentiments, as well as means of alleviation. Through these safety valves, hostility is prevented from turning against its original objects.

The achievement of specific ends or the defeat of a particular enemy were secondary considerations in Mundurucú warfare. They fought *any* group and they fought *for the sake of fighting*. The ultimate source of their hostility was the *repressed* hostility generated within the society, and the ultimate source of repression was the potential destructiveness of intrasocietal aggression.

Safety valve institutions of one kind or another are probably universal in culture. Coser (*Ibid*:41) distinguishes two means by which aggressiveness may safely be released by the members of a society. These are:

. . . *Ventilation*, which provide a socially sanctioned framework for carrying out conflict without leading to consequences that disrupt relations within a group, and those safety-valve institutions which serve to divert hostility onto substitute objects or which function as channels for cathartic release.

Mundurucú warfare and sorcery fall into the class of "safety-valve institutions"; the structure of the society is such that Ventilation would be impossible insofar as the Mundurucú cannot publicly acknowledge the existence of intrasocietal hostilities. The institutionalized public arguments and wrestling matches of the Trumai Indians (Murphy and Quain 1955:57–59) and the spear throwing bouts between Upper Xingú tribes (Galvão 1950:366) are illustrations of cases in which hostility is allowed to appear in a controlled and sanctioned context and is thereby dissipated. Sides are drawn and the issue is resolved among the Upper Xingú groups; the Mundurucú cannot even afford to take sides openly.

Coser (1956: 156-7) has considered the relationship between conflict and the rigidity of the social structure, which he defines as "the degree to which it disallows direct expression of antagonistic claims," and concludes:

> Our hypothesis, that the need for safety-valve institutions increases with the rigidity of the social system, may be extended to suggest that unrealistic [i.e. *cathartic* and not *manifest* issues] conflict may be expected to occur as a consequence of rigidity present in the social structure.

Mundurucú warfare was clearly "unrealistic" and the social structure was *rigid* in Coser's sense. It is possible to broaden our example to include a larger category of rigid social structures and to consider their functional concomitants. I would propose as a sociologically testable hypothesis that matrilocal societies must suppress open aggression in order to insure cohesion and continuity. If we take any matrilocal and matrilineal or bilateral society as our model, the system of residence tends to disperse males at least throughout the local community. Thus, any male will have close ties of kinship and economic interdependence with his housemates, his natal household, the households of his maternal uncle(s) and the households of his brothers. The same is true of patrilocal societies from the viewpoint of the women, but males are the principal political role-players in all human societies. Any conflict involving men therefore becomes a matter of deep community concern. As among the Mundurucú, if the lines of allegiance in a conflict situation are drawn according to kinship in any matrilocal society, bonds of local contiguity will be sundered; if primary loyalty is given to bonds of residence, the ties of kinship will be broken. In short, when the residence and kin groups of the male do not coincide, he acquires multiple commitments that may come into conflict. Also, the individual male will more readily espouse his grievances if he cannot rely upon the full support of a solidary group.

Brief reference to the ethnographic literature suggests that the social solidarity of matrilocal groups is not restricted to my model. Writing of the Apinayé, Nimuendajú (1939:129) says:

> I have never heard of a case of rape nor witnessed anything of publicly scandalous adultery, larceny, or slander. Only when intoxicated do these natives inflict damage on property and bodily maltreatment on persons or commit manslaughter. Compared with any Šerente settlement the village of Bacaba, at least, is a model of internal peace and harmony, and this would hold for Gato Preto, too, in the absence of alcohol.

The Šerente and the Apinayé are Gê-speaking groups of eastern Brazil and are culturally quite similar. The principal difference between them is that the fractious Šerente are patrilineal and patrilocal, while the harmonious Apinayé are matrilineal and matrilocal. Turning to North America, we have the classical example of the matrilocal and "Apollonian" Pueblonas. Ellis (1951:199) has noted of Pueblo warfare:

> Beyond protection, warfare served to provide legitimate outlet for the frustrations and aggressions arising from unpermitted competition or suspicions thereof among peoples of the same general culture.

F. Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1957 SQ13 Manduruca SQ13

The repression of open conflict among the Pueblians accounts for the latent hostility that many ethnologists have seen seething below surface relations. Under modern conditions this often results in community fission, and the same process can be noted among the contemporary, unwarring Mundurucú. Lacking adequate safety-valves for the release of aggression, the Mundurucú now tend to withdraw from the frustrating situation.

Not all matrilocal groups repress aggression to the same extent as do the Mundurucú, nor are they as warlike. The greater emphasis of the Mundurucú upon social cohesion and external aggression stems from the persistence of patrilineal clans in a matrilocal society. This factor, combined with inter-village matrilocality, made hostility even more explosive and internal release systems less workable. It structured the group toward warfare and provided the organization for its effective pursuit. Some deviation from our model is expectable, for there is no fixed and unvarying reservoir of aggression in society; it has its roots in the social structure, as does its expression. Our thesis states only that matrilocal societies must repress the open expression of intrasocietal conflict and that the repressed hostility, variable in intensity, will be released through acceptable and nondisruptive means within the society, or through warfare, or through both. But warfare, it can be concluded, is an especially effective means of promoting social cohesion in that it provides an occasion upon which the members of the society unite and submerge their factional differences in the vigorous pursuit of a common purpose.

NOTES

[1] The field research upon which the article is based was conducted by my wife and me during 1952–53 and was supported by a Research Training Fellowship, granted by the Social Science Research Council, and the William Bayard Cutting Traveling Fellowship, awarded through the Trustees of Columbia University. Grateful acknowledgment is made to these institutions.

The present article was read in manuscript by David M. Schneider and profited greatly from his suggestions.

[2] This seemingly incredible series was still remembered by the Urubú Indians of the upper Gurupí River in the state of Maranhão, according to a personal communication from the Brazilian ethnologist, Dr. Darcy Ribeiro.

[3] A fuller description of the ceremonies held subsequent to a successful raid will be published in a forthcoming monograph (Murphy n.d.).

REFERENCES CITED

ALMEIDA SERRA, RICARDO
1869 Navegação do Rio Tapajós para o Pará (1770). Revista do Instituto Historico e Geografico Brasileiro 9:1–16.

ALVES DE CASTRO, MANOEL
1817 Corografia brasiliea. Rio de Janeiro.

BATES, HENRY W.
1863 The naturalist on the river Amazons. London.

CRANDLESS, W.
1882 Notes on the rivers Arinos, Juruena, and Tapajós. Journal of the Royal Geographic Society 30:119–128.

COSER, LEWIS A.
1956 The functions of social conflict. Glencoe, The Free Press.

Y. Murphy E-5 (1954-1955)1957 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

Coudreau, Henri
1897 Voyage au Tapajós, 1896. Paris.
Ellis, Florence Hawley
1951 Patterns of aggression and the war cult in Southwestern Pueblos. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 7:177-201.
Fortune, Gerwen
1939 The structure and semantics of Mohave warfare. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 1(1):97-118.
Fragoso, Fortunato
1952 A função social da guerra na sociedade Tapirapés. São Paulo.
Fuerst, Wayne
1965 The dynamics of identity among the Talmud. London, Oxford Press.
Galvão, Eduardo
1959 O uso do propulsor entre as tribos do alto Xingu. Revista do Museu Paulista 11: 353-68.
Huertt, Claudio F.
1885 Contribuições para a etnologia do Valle do Amazonas. Archivos do Museu Nacional 6:1-174. Rio de Janeiro.
Menéndez Nobrega, José
1862 Roteiro da viagem da cidade do Pará até as últimas colonias dos Dominios Portuguezes ao rio Rio Amazonas e Negro, 1768. Pará.
Murphy, Robert F.
1960 Matrilineality and patrilineality in Mundurucú society. American Anthropologist 62:414-34.
N. d. Mundurucú religion. Ms.
Murphy, Robert F. and Buell Quain
1955 The Trumai Indians of Central Brazil. American Ethnological Society, Monograph XXIV.
Newman, W. W.
1950 A re-examination of the causes of Plains warfare. American Anthropologist 52: 317-30.
Nimuendajú, Curt
1939 The Apinayé (translated by Robert H. Lowie). Catholic University of America, Anthropological Series No. 8.
Simmel, Georg
1955 Conflict (translated by Kurt Wolff). Glencoe, The Free Press.
Spix, Johann B. von and Karl F. P. von Martius
1831 Reise in Brasilien, Vol. 3. München.
Teixeira, Antonio M. G.
1877 Estudos sobre a tribu "Mundurukú." Revista do Instituto Historico e Geografico Brasileiro 40, No. 2:73-161. Rio de Janeiro.